SOAR WORKS
SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery

SAMHSA
Substance Abuse and Mental Health
Services Administration

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2021 SAMHSA SOAR NOVEMBER E-NEWS

Celebrate Native American Heritage Month—New SOAR Resource!

Please join the SAMHSA SOAR TA Center in honoring and celebrating the diverse cultures and contributions of American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/AN) this November. Native American Heritage Month is an opportunity to share information on how to support Native people and overcome historical and present-day barriers to resources and assistance.


In honor of Native American Heritage Month, we are introducing the *SOAR Enhances Income Stability in American Indian and Alaska Native Communities* issue brief. This valuable resource offers providers helpful information on the unique challenges that AI/AN people with serious mental illness who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness face in their efforts to gain access to Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits. Throughout the brief, we describe how the SOAR model's culturally sensitive engagement process and holistic approach to SSI/SSDI application assistance can be significant for AI/AN community members residing on or off reservations. When combined with other support and resources, the SOAR model can lead to long-term stability through access to affordable or supported housing, more robust health care and treatment options, and additional employment opportunities for AI/AN communities.
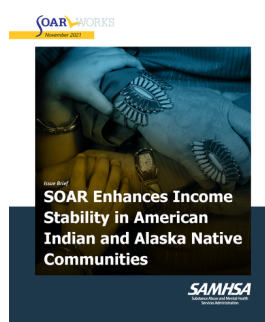
Download the Issue Brief

Be Well With Our New SOAR Box Breathing Exercise

The SAMHSA SOAR TA Center is happy to release a box breathing GIF to help SOAR practitioners incorporate a mindful moment into their day. Box breathing, or square breathing, is the technique of taking slow, deep, methodical breaths to ground and

calm yourself. This kind of breathing can heighten performance and concentration as well as relieve stress. The GIF is 16 seconds long and follows a 4-second cycle to inhale, hold, exhale, and hold again before restarting. We encourage you to download and share this GIF as an easy and accessible meditation tool to use throughout your day, whether before meetings, after sending an important email, or between tasks. This GIF can be found on GIPHY for free, public use.

Download the SOAR Box Breathing GIF
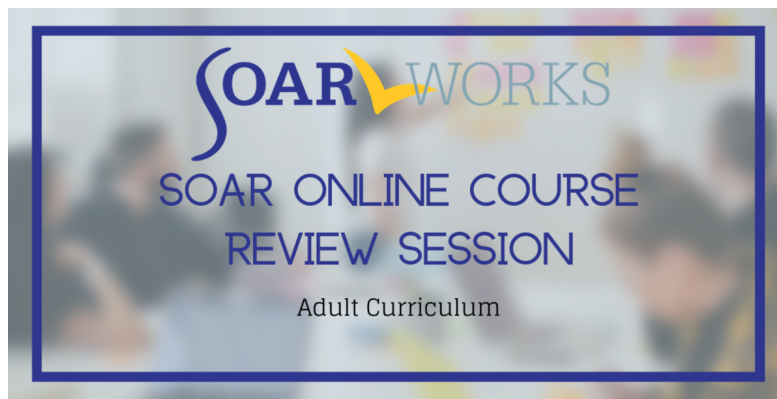
See How SOAR Works

SOAR Online Course: Adult Curriculum Review Session

December 8, 2021, 2:00-5:00 p.m. ET

Have you completed the *SOAR Online Course: Adult Curriculum* but feel there are some aspects of the process you would like to review? We are offering an opportunity for SOAR-trained practitioners to attend a virtual SOAR Online Course Review Session facilitated by the SAMHSA SOAR TA Center. We will review what you learned in the *SOAR Online Course: Adult Curriculum* and discuss the key components of the SOAR-assisted SSI/SSDI application process.

Register for the Review Session

SOARing Over Lunch Conference Calls

November 16, 2021, 1:00-2:00 p.m. ET

Add SOARing Over Lunch to Your Calendar

Webinar Materials Now Available: Employment Supports and Benefits Planning for SOAR Beneficiaries

In this webinar, held on October 26, 2021, the SAMHSA SOAR TA Center discussed how SOAR providers can help SSI/SSDI beneficiaries access employment support services such as Individual Placement and Support (IPS) and benefits planning. The materials and recording from this webinar are now available for on-demand access.

Community Spotlight

Funding Success: City of Providence Rhode Island!

The Rhode Island Coalition for the Homeless is the recipient of local grant funding from the City of Providence to support the development of dedicated SOAR specialists. The new funding source comes from the Providence Healthy Communities Office and aims to connect individuals who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness and have a mental illness, medical impairment, and/or a co-occurring substance use disorder to SSI/SSDI benefits through the SOAR model. Through this funding, the Rhode Island Coalition for the Homeless will support one full-time dedicated SOAR caseworker and contract with two community agencies to support six additional part-time positions.

From State Team Lead, Lindsay Cutler:

> *"I am very excited about this opportunity! This is the first time our state has had any funding stream that was specifically dedicated to SOAR. It's important to have that dedicated funding source so that we aren't competing for funding with the other services that our homeless system needs and sends a message about the importance of SOAR. We hope the success of this collaboration with Providence can be used as a model for other cities to dedicate resources for local SOAR work."*

Application Tip! Setting an Applicant's Protective Filing Date

Setting the applicant's Protective Filing Date (PFD) is one of the most important steps in the process! The PFD is the date the applicant/SOAR caseworker first contacts the Social Security Administration (SSA) indicating an intent to apply for SSI/SSDI. It is also used to determine when an individual can start receiving SSI benefits. The SOAR process recommends setting the PFD online by beginning the Online Disability Benefit Application and making sure that you stop at the re-entry number. Once the PFD is set, a SOAR caseworker will have 60 days to complete the claim. Step-by-step instructions to set the protective filing date can be found on the SOARWorks website!

SSA Updates

Save Time Applying for SNAP and SSI

When you apply for SSI, you can also apply for the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP). SNAP is a federal program—run by state agencies—that helps people with low incomes purchase nutritious food.

Creating a my Social Security Account Just Got Easier!

Creating a my Social Security Account is a key step in the disability application process, and now creating an account is even easier! You no longer have to answer questions about your finances or past residences, and instead you can create an account with Login.gov (you will need a valid e-mail or phone number)! Check out SSA's website for an easy-to-follow infographic.

Webinar: SAMHSA's Homeless and Housing Resource Center

November 18, 2021, 2:00 p.m. ET

Registration is open for part two of the Stabilizing Housing for Families webinar series, Understanding and Navigating Housing Rights. In this webinar presented by the Homeless and Housing Resource Center (HHRC) and the National Family Support Technical Assistance Center (NFSTAC), presenters will share important information about understanding and navigating housing rights to help families regain housing stability.

SOAR Jobs

- **Nebraska**: Community Action Partnership of Western Nebraska is seeking a full-time SOAR case manager to assist individuals apply for Social Security disability benefits in Gering, Nebraska.
- **Texas**: IntegralCare is seeking a full-time SOAR specialist based in Austin, Texas.
- **Texas:** The SAFE Alliance is seeking a full-time SOAR Benefits Specialist based in Austin, Texas.

Learn more about these positions on the SOARWorks website. Do you have a job posting you would like to share with the SOAR community? Please submit it to the SAMHSA SOAR TA Center!

More From SOAR

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The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) Technical Assistance (TA) Center is sponsored by SAMHSA, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

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